



Standard of Authority – Part 2

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In our last article, we established that, when it comes to matters of religion, Jesus Christ has all authority (Hebrews 1:1-2, Matthew 28:18 and Ephesians 1:22-23). Jesus said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him; the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48 NKJV). Jesus, having all authority, has thus placed that authority in His words (not just the words in red letters in our Bibles). Having established where authority is, let us notice where it is not.

Authority is not in what we think. Isaiah wrote, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9). Authority is not in what seems or feels right. Solomon wrote, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12; also see Proverbs 28:26). What we think or feel is right may not be what God expects of us. This is clearly seen in the case of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Concerning a time prior to becoming a Christian, Paul said, “I verily **thought with myself**, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, **having received authority** from the chief priests...” (Acts 26:9-10). Although Paul had received authority from the religious leaders of that day, he had still gone against Jesus.

Authority is not in man written creeds, manuals, catechisms, prayer books, disciplines, or any other book originating in the mind of man (II Peter 1:3; Revelation 22:18-19). Authority is

not in a “preacher,” “pastor,” or “priest.” Paul wrote, “That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (I Corinthians 2:5). We cannot depend on the teaching of men to be a standard of authority. John wrote, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (I John 4:1). Paul told the Christians in Thessalonica to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (I Thessalonians 5:21). Those in Berea were commended because “they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). How could these people be told to prove or test the teachings or doctrines of others, if there was no standard of authority by which they were to compare?

At the West Jefferson church of Christ, we believe the Word of God (the Bible) is the only source of authority (it is inspired of God - II Timothy 3:16) and thus plead that all men will come “Back to the Bible.” If you would like to study further with us from God’s Word by either an in-home open Bible study or correspondence course my mail, please print & return this coupon to: Back To The Bible; 221 Barnett Street; West Jefferson, NC 28694 or visit our website @ www.wjchurchofchrist.org.

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